

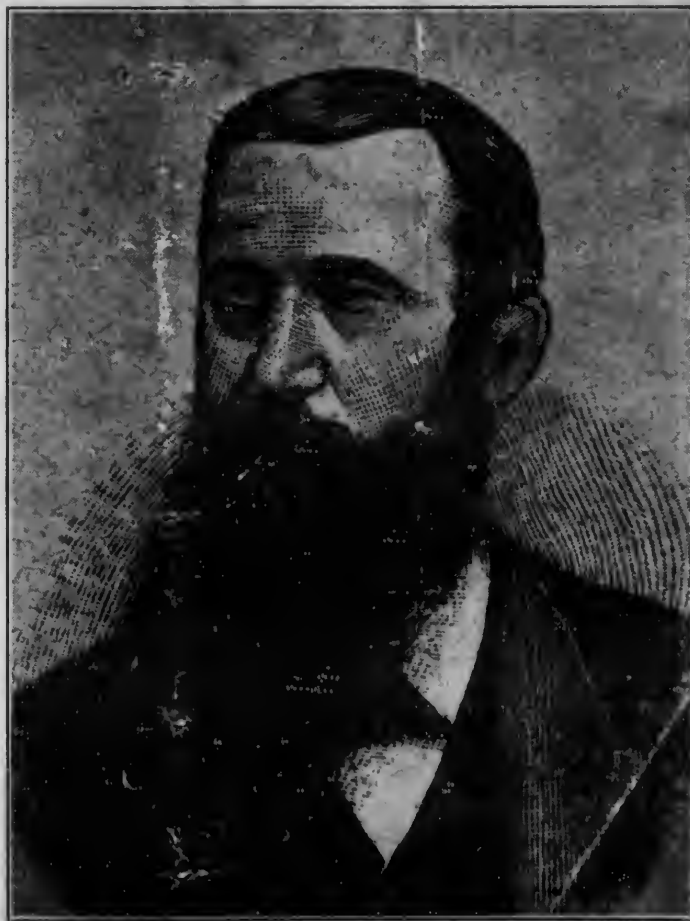
BLUE GRASS BLADE

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DEVOTED TO THE PROPAGANDA OF FREEDOM OF THOUGHT



HARRIS HOOVER.

For Years an Active Worker in the Freethought Ranks.

Harris Hoover

(By Harriet M. Ciosz.)

The measure of time marked by the figures 1833 was fraught with destiny. During that year the heavens were illuminated with light, and from remotest space a million meteors were rained upon the earth. This visitation recurring at infrequent intervals, awakened the scientific mind to research, while worshipful devotees of deity prostrated themselves in superstitious awe. The claim of one lone star at Bethlehem marking the birthplace of a Saviour, is far outclassed by this shower of shining stars, which make memorable the birth year of Harris Hoover, subject of this sketch.

Are we to judge a man's character by the company he keeps? Then do not forget the fact that our magnificent emancipator, Robert G. Ingersoll, was born in 1833, and within a radius of two years appeared a great number of men with hearts filled with the love of liberty for humankind; and as they approached the age of discretion, they realized that it was folly to wait for the final adjustment of affairs in heaven, so threw themselves into the work of enlightenment, with the commendable purpose of happiness on earth.

It is inspiring to look upon the luminaries of greater or lesser brilliancy which appeared upon the horizon almost simultaneously with the men mentioned above, and, learning of the unselfish labors of Bradlaugh and Haackel, and Labouchere and Bjornsten, and Wettstein, we must admit the elements of equalization introduced to balance the orthodox teachings of their contemporaries like Gibbons, Spurgeon and Talmage.

Harris Hoover was born at Clearfield, Penn., April 21st, 1833. His father being a teacher, he acquired a good common school course, which was supplemented by much reading and the acquisition of proficiency in several of the higher branches such as the Blade Correspondence School affords. He tilled the soil until twenty-one years of age, but his brain began to pulsate, his pen caught the vibration, and his first work for the press was done at the age of 15 years, and from that time to this it has not been idle, though of late has been less active. In 1855, having contracted the Western fever, he "struck the trail" for Iowa, and located in Webster City.

Personally, I, the writer of these poor lines, feel a sense of appreciation for my native town since discovering that this man once made his home here, and the "might have been" is a sad thought for me since I was not so fortunate as to be personally associated with him as my mother was during his stay in this city.

On July 4th, 1859, he was married to Mary E. Beardsley, and two children are the solace of their declining years.

On June 13, 1861, he enlisted in the First Iowa Cavalry Volunteers, and served continuously as a soldier until Sept. 9th, 1861, when he was mustered out of Uncle Sam's service, returned to Pennsylvania, and purchased the old family farm, where he lived until the memorable panic of '73 swept away his accumulated savings, after which he removed to the county seat, and was elected County Commissioner, and later on was employed to write county history in Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.

In 1881 he located in Pittsburg, the storm center of the steel section,—the city where the "divine right of the boss" to rule his hirelings, is rigorously applied. Here he helped to organize the Pittsburg Liberal League, and established "Truth," the organ of the above society, and for five years was reporter, solicitor, secretary, and general Jack of all trades, and the last five years of the Society's life held the office of President. During the turbulent times in the American Secular Union (1888) our friend stood firmly for the integrity of administration according to his

standard, and opposed the entrenched management, thereby losing some friends, but with his characteristic tenacity of principle, he says: "I do not regret anything I then said or did."

During his connection with the Pittsburg Secular Society, this brother delivered 60 Free thought and Scientific lectures, and 30 funeral discourses, besides holding numerous debates with clergymen. He humbly admits that he was once foolish enough to join the Methodist Church, but says in extenuation: "I was very young and knew no better, but like the measles, it ran its course, and I recovered my reason." And now at 75 years of age, —60 of which he has been a tireless contributor to the Liberal press, among them the Investigator, Banner of Light, Index, Religio-Philosophical Journal, The Monist, Lucifer, Iron Clad Age, Independent Pulpit, Blue Grass Blade, etc., and during which time his brain has been busy with the problems which press persistently for solution, he says: "The longer I live the more I am convinced that all religion is gross superstition; it is a splendid method of ensnaring men, and therefore a menace to the race." Besides his voluminous prose productions, he writes readily in rhyme, and the poetical value of his verse is unquestionable.

To have been associated with men and women represented by standard bearers like Robert G. Ingersoll and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, is indeed a privilege and an education, and to have held council and given advice to the younger aspirants like Helen Gardner and Editor Charlesworth, earns for him our gratitude and the appreciation that his work, which is now naturally growing wearisome, can be carried on by such capable campaigners.

During the St. Louis Exposition, our friend again took up the westward march, on account of ill health in his family. He located on an Arkansas claim. A few years ago, while clearing his claim, he received a fall which ultimately brought on paralysis of the lower limbs, and after nine months of hospital treatment, he stoically tells me his hands are becoming useless also, and that he is now home to face the inevitable, but declares, "I have the courage to do it!"

My first acquaintance with infidel organizations impressed me because of the large numbers of aged people in the ranks, and my thoughts reverted to the Christian contention that unbelief would be discarded at death's door; but here were brilliant minds —men and women treading the brink of uncertainty without faltering, and absolutely fearless for the future, and our heroic brother Hoover, prostrated with pain, scorns the idea of recanting and scorns such intimations by Christians. His will is indomitable. In his present semi-helpless state, he made the thousand-mile journey from the Tennessee hospital to his home without company, and though enduring constant suffering, he has kept his mind busy, having read tens of thousand of pages since his enforced state of idleness.

Our little Iowa town of Webster City may yet become famous, for in January, 1856, a meeting was held here and a resolution passed in honor of old John Brown, in which our friend wrote—"Slavery or involuntary servitude shall be prohibited in the territories." Thus he might lay claim to being the father of the Republican party, and our town its birthplace. With due deference to the progressive spirit of party originators, I must record that our city has not yet extricated itself from the rut of Republican party politics. He further states that he might lay claim to the authorship of the germ theory of disease, since he announced it in 1856 as a result of the study of Tyndal's "Fragments of Science."

The Human Prayer

The helping wish—
The aim of all.

The Science Key.
Which opens now,
Our heaven on Earth.

WITHOUT THEOLOGY OR METAPHYSICS.

'Nichts vom Verganglichen,
Wie's auch geshach;
Uns zu verewigen,—
Sind wir ja da."

—Goethe.

Translation—
Naught of the transitory.
Howsoever it may appear;
Ourselves to eternalize,—
For that are we here.

(By Thaddeus Burr Wakeman.)

Owing to the controversy that has arisen from the publication of the Human Prayer, as it appeared in The Blue Grass Blade, The Open Court, and other publications of Rational thought, the following explanation is now submitted. In order that the reader may understand the prayer and the key given, the whole must be read in conjunction with it.

whereby the increasing co-operation of the individual organs, in heart, head and hand, must ever, by its integrative helpfulness, work out a happier future. Such, Science now shows to be the chief end and object of human existence as a whole—and consequently of all of its parts and members. Every general social integration is a religion, and every incline thereunto is a wish and a prayer.

THE PRAYER

(Inspired by "The Choir Invisible.")

O World, O Man, and Soul of Me—
The Endless ALL, Our Three in ONE!
O, May I live with love and joy—
In Thee—in THEE!

O, May I learn to know Thee True,
So that my life may do The Good,—
So that my work may fruitful be
The Ages through!
So bring our Republic of MAN.

Our Paradise of Earth to be,
For Each and All—for Me and All,
As best we can!
So on and ON!—For evermore.
Amen—Amen.

So may I do for human kind
All else should do in turn for me;
So Duty meet with honest deeds
And noblest mind.

Thus may my Will as Thine be done,
And so fulfill our highest end—
As I in Thee shall ever live,
And work as ONE!

ECHO—

So, Each for All,
And All for Each!
From Each his highest deed,
To Each as he may need!
Amen—Amen!

EXPLANATORY.

This prayer was contributed by Mr. Thaddeus B. Wakeman to The Open Court of April, 1908, where it appeared with a critical note by the editor. Mr. Wakeman says in letters to the editor with regard to the prayer:

"It must be first noted, that the Scene of this Prayer is the Earth, the enduring home of the Human Race, and a part of the infinite, uncreated and endless correlating World, whose tome, our Now, is eternity itself—there is no other. 'The Paradise of Earth' is in process of evolution under the fundamental law of human sociology, history and religion, to-wit:—Human progress is a continuous process of reciprocal integration and differentiation,

"This prayer may help those who desire to be more effective members of this true and higher integration, this 'Religion' of Science and Humanity, to feed the heart, 'out of which are the issues of life,' by a thoughtful union by it with others as to the best means of finding that better life on earth.

"Thus, 'The Choir Invisible' (of George Eliot), really longed for through the ages, may become a voice, ever more powerful, leading the union, welfare and progress of man 'as the music and gladness of the world.'

"Then, under Evolution, it might be a delight to find that all past faiths, however illusory in their origins, have become the first and preparatory stages of this higher Religion, the only

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'Faith' unflinching love and aspiration with knowledge!—So take this prayer as a suggestion.

"If it is anything at all, it is really the most important thing put in print for a very long time. It is the scientific solution many are after—but so simple and comprehensive, that it will have to be grown to or towards gradually. It is too immense to be readily grasped.

"We simply wish and pray to Self, and you and all to join and aid in a higher life, integration and progress. Why not?

"The I or Me of the first line is our subjective consciousness or 'Ego' which the objective World, Man and Soul (the soul meaning unconscious or 'subliminal' action of our nerve-system) constantly beget, create and sustain; or call it the Ego, which attends the processes of that objective Three, as a 'concomitant correlation.'"

THE KEY.

VERSE 1.—Recognizes the "World" as the endless All containing "Man," the human race on this Earth, the "Soul" as the sum of the human nerve process, of which the Ego or I is the result, which wishes and so prays to live with love and joy in The Infinite Monism, that is, "In Thee," objectively, and "In Thee," subjectively.

VERSE 2.—Descends from the All to the human Kind, "The Man" on Earth, and meets with the reciprocal relation of "Each to All," and of "All to Each," and the fact and sense of "duty" which is our obligation arising from human relations and which is to be satisfied by honest deeds, to be performed with "the noblest mind."

VERSE 3.—But to do these human duties it is necessary "to know the true in order to do the good," so that the "fruitful work for the good may carry our life with its results the Ages through."

VERSE 4.—Recognizes our subjective "Will" and its work as the

flower of Objective Nature, and with it uniting as One to complete the highest "end" and aim of both, by a life and workful union as One. This is the truth of the passage in the "Winter's Tale," which reads thus:—

"Nature is made better by no man,
But Nature makes that man; so o'er that Art
Which, you say, adds to Nature, is an Art
That Nature makes: The Art Itself is Nature."

VERSE 5.—The end and aim of this union of Natural and Human Art is the Co-operative Republic of Man, as Thomas Paine designed, and as the Evolution Natural and Human will eventually transform into the "Paradise of Earth" to continue for Each and All indefinitely. "So, on and on for evermore!" This endless progress of our Paradise of Earth is the finale of Shakespeare's Tempest and Goethe's Faust, and is the human "Heaven" of Objective Science and of human aspiration. The repetition of "Amen!—Amen!" represents this union of the Objective and Subjective in this Paradise, which will be the result of both, as above noted by the "In Thee—In Thee!" of the first verse, which is thus realized as the conclusion of the Prayer.

THE ECHO recalls the "means" of the whole Prayer by which its ever-progressive "Paradise" is to be realized, by the incline and preparation of ALL our being towards the "higher integration" of mankind.

NOTE.—It will now be seen that this Prayer is not a "Lord's Prayer," to be swallowed blindly. It is a substitute for all "Lord's Prayers", which the progress of Science has shown to be wholly untrue and useless. This prayer is, from the very fact of its existence, a defiance. If any one can find in it anything inserted that ought to be omitted, or anything omitted that ought to be inserted, let him show it in this paper, or to the contributor, Mr. T. B. Wakeman.—(Ed.)

MY LADDIE'S LIFE LESSON.

I was reading my wee bonnie laddie a tale
Of a boy who went sailing away
In a flying machine; with a goblin in green—
To the land where the goblin folk stay;
Of the journey they made, of the pranks that they played—
The adventures that fell to their lot;
And my wee laddie's eyes told of wonder, surprise—
But of sweet, simple faith in the plot.

But at last it came out that the tale was a dream—
And my laddie was sorely distressed;
One dissatisfied look he gave me and the book—
Then he sobbed out his grief on my breast.
"My dear laddie," I said, "such a tale as I've read
Could be only a dream, don't you know!"
But a heart-breaking sigh voiced the pitiful cry:
"Oh, I wanted it all to be so!"

Oh, my laddie—dear laddie! Each morn of your life
Will be fraught with the moonshiny gleams—
With the shimmer and sheen, and the silver and green
Of the tenuous tissue of dreams.
But as frost on the pane turns to sorrowful rain,
At the touch of the sun, they will go;
And the cry and the plea of your heart will still be:
"Oh, I wanted them all to be so!"

THE EMERGENCY FUND.

The Blade extends its heartiest thanks and praise to those who have so nobly and cheerfully responded to the call for this fund, and we can assure them that considerable good has been done thereby. Up to and including the last day of December, as shown by the report given below, there has been received the total sum of \$37.50. This has enabled us to send, and we are now sending, the Blade, free of cost, to 21 aged, infirm, indigent and incapable Freethinkers. We have nearly fifty more on the list who could be cheered by such a contribution, and these we intend to add thereto just as soon as the condition of the fund will permit. With January 1, 1909, we renew the fund by making a new start, so that friends renewing their subscription, if able and willing to do so, may add a trifle thereto for the benefit of their more unfortunate brethren. The close of the fund for 1908 stands as follows:—

Previously acknowledged	-	\$29.50
John Arp	- - - - -	5.00
J. S. Carnahan	- - - - -	1.00
H. L. Peak	- - - - -	1.50
Total	- - - - -	\$37.50

Has Christianity Bettered Human Conditions?

Reference to History Betrays its Pernicious
Influence upon the Race, and How
It Has Retarded Progress.

(By John T. Bays.)

It is a general belief that Christianity is a progressive religion, and that it has raised our standard of morals and education; but the truth is for from that. Instead of Christianity raising the standards of morals and education, the standards were raised in spite of Christianity, and to prove this I will go back and show you the world as Christianity found it, and then show you the world as Christianity made it.

To hear a preacher tell of the world, as Christianity found it, would give you the impression that Christianity found the human race all savages and transformed them to civilized men, as Moses transformed the rod to a serpent. But, thank nature, we have other ways of gaining information than from these prevaricators.

I shall quote, ad verbum, from the historians as to the period before the Christians gained sway (331 A. D.). In speaking of the period before the Christian conquest (I will call it) West says:

"An area as large as the United States, with a population of one hundred millions, rested in the 'good Roman peace' for nearly four hundred years. Never before or since has so large a part of the world known such unbroken rest from the horrors and wastes of war."

"The people paid but little attention to the rulers, and thought of them chiefly as the symbol of the ruling providence which, throughout the civilized world, had silenced war and faction and secured the blessings of prosperity and peace, before unknown."—Capes' Early Empire.

The reign of the Antonines (96-192 A.D.) has been called the "golden age of humanity." Gibbon believed that a man, if allowed his choice, would prefer to have lived then rather than at any other period of the world's history.

"And if an angel of the Lord were to strike a balance whether the domain ruled by Severus Antoninus was governed with greater intelligence and greater humanity at that time or in the present day; whether civilization and national prosperity generally have since that time advanced or retrograded, it is very doubtful whether the

decision would be in favor of the present."—Mounseu.

"The roads were safe. Piracy ceased upon the seas, and trade flourished as it was not to flourish again for a thousand years."

"From frontier to frontier communication was safe and rapid. The grand military and post roads ran in trunk lines—a thousand miles at a stretch—from every frontier towards the central heart of the empire, with a dense net-work of ramifications in every province. Guide books described routes and distances. Inns abounded. The imperial couriers that passed along the great highways hurried by a hundred and fifty mile-stones a day, and private travel, from the Thames to the Euphrates, was swifter, safer and more comfortable than ever again until well into the nineteenth century."—West's Ancient World.

"Everywhere rude stockade villages changed into stately marts of trade, huts into palaces, footpaths into paved Roman roads. Roman irrigation made part of the African desert the garden of the world, where from drifting sands desolate ruins mock the travel of today. In Gaul Caesar found no real towns. In the third century that province had one hundred and sixteen flourishing cities, with baths, temples, amphitheatres, works of art, roads, aqueducts, and schools of eloquence and rhetoric."—West

The three great centers of learning were Rome, Alexandria and Athens, all of which had very extensive libraries and professorships. Marcus Aurelius began the practice of permanent State endowments. And in connection with the Universities there were colleges and grammar schools endowed by the State, similar to ours of the present day. And as to the morals of the people, West says: "Woman became full the equal of man in law, and his companion instead of his servant in the family."

Plutarch's precepts on marriage "fall little if at all below any of modern days." And his own family life afforded a beautiful ideal of domestic happiness. There were a vast amount of public and private charity. Homes for poor children and orphan girls were established. Tacitus tells how, after a great accident near Rome, the rich opened their houses and gave their wealth to relieve the sufferers, which shows that the rich of that day were far better morally than our plutocrats of the present age. As to the treatment of animals, West says: "There seems little doubt that animals were

better treated under the pagan Empire than in Southern Europe today."

And "Slavery grew milder. Emancipation became so common that, on an average, household slaves were freed after six years' service."—West.

Sympathies broaden'd. Philosophers were fond of dwelling upon the thought that all men are brothers. Marcus Aurelius said: "As Emperor, I am a Roman; but as a man, my city is the world."

I will quote some of the moral teachings, and let the reader judge the moral nature of the people by them.—

"The best way to revenge thyself is not to become like the evil doer."

"Suppose that men curse thee, or kill thee,—if a man stand by a pure spring and curse it, the spring does not cease to send up clear water."

"Everything harmonizes with me which harmonizes with thee, O Universe! Nothing is too early or too late which is in due time for thee! Everything is fruitful to me which thy seasons bring, O Nature! From thee are all things; in thee are all things; to thee all things return."—Marcus Aurelius.

I think this is a fine sample of reverence for those who feel grateful to the powers that made them. Aurelius did not picture out some fabulous god and pay reverence to it for what Mother Nature does, but paid his reverence to the one to whom it justly belonged.

"Pass through this little space of time conformably to Nature, and end thy journey in content—just as olive branch falls when it is ripe; blessing Nature who produced it, and thanking the tree on which it grew."—Marcus Aurelius.

"Nothing is smaller than love of pleasure and love of gain and pride. Nothing is superior to magnanimity and love of mankind and benevolence."

"No man who loves money and pleasure and fame, also loves mankind; but only he who loves virtue."

"When you die you will not exist, but you will be something else of which the world has need; you came into existence not when you chose, but when the world had need of you."

"It is not possible to be free from faults; but it is possible to direct your efforts incessantly to bring faultlessness."—Epictetus.

This empire was made up principally of liberals and free thinkers; and "the empire encouraged the utmost freedom of thought

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upon all subjects.—West. This is something that cannot be said of any Christian nation.

I think I have shown very fully that the world as the Christian religion found it was highly advanced in every respect; and now I will show by the same unbiased authorities that the Christian religion pulled down this highly advanced civilization and proved itself a scourge to the earth.

We all know that Christianity was put in to power by Constantine who had been converted to their faith, in the beginning of the fourth century. And so I shall continue to quote from the same authorities concerning this period now from where Christianity takes hold of the world, onward. And let the reader decide whether the world advanced or retrograded.

The first heading I notice in this period, in West's Ancient World, is the following: "Decay in Literature." Great names in poetry, history, and science cease. Philosophy and theology became a weary waste of controversy. We have multitudes of "Apologies" for Christianity from the church Fathers.

The next heading is "Persecution by the Church." "In 312, as we saw, Christianity secured perfect toleration for its worship, and soon after it was given an especially favored place among the religions of the Empire. Almost at once it began to use violence to stamp out other religions."—West.

"In centuries to come this persecution by the church dwarfed into insignificance even the terrible persecutions it had suffered. The motive, too, differed widely from that of the old Imperial persecutions. It was not political. In general, each persecuting sect since has justified its action on the ground that belief in its particular faith

was necessary to salvation. Therefore, it seemed right and merciful to torture the bodies of heretics in order to save their souls and protect the souls of others. Under cover of such theory, they now began a dark and bloody chapter in human history, —to last for over twelve hundred years."—West.

"The period was one of intellectual decay. There were no more poets and no more new discoveries in science; even the old science and literature were neglected."—West.

The peasantry became serfs; they were bound to their labor on the soil, and changed masters with the land they tilled."—West.

The Christian religion brought on the caste system in all other lives as well as the peasants. Every laborer or artisan was compelled to stay in the same vocation for all generations, as it seemed, until "freedom of movement seemed lost." "In its industries and its social relations, as well as in government, the Empire was becoming despotic and oriental."—West.

"The earth swarmed with the consuming hierarchy of extortion, so that it was said that they who received taxes were more than they who paid them."—Goldsmith.

And these "taxes were no longer spent in aiding industry; they went to support the machinery of government and the luxury of court."

"One cause of the rapid intellectual decline of the fourth century is that many Christians were hostile to pagan science and literature, while for a long time the Christian world produced little to take its place." Here West says "pagan science," but it was not because of the pagans having developed the sciences that caused the Christians to be hostile to them, but Chris-

tianity was hostile to science then for the same reason that they are now, and always have been. Science shows the Bible to be a lie, and that is why they threw away science when they were in power, and why they would throw it away today should they get the power again. During this dark and bloody epoch of Christian rule called the "Dark Ages, nearly all that civilization had been piling up for centuries was swept away, and a period of confusion, lawlessness and ignorance, the lowest point ever reached by European civilization, was the result. The whole 400 years (from 400 to 800 A. D.) are properly called the "Dark Ages."—West.

West is or was a Christian, and shows some partiality in giving the account of them, but is not this a pretty bad statement for to have to make about the influence of one's religion upon the world?

"Classical literature suddenly became extinct. The old Roman schools disappeared, or were represented only by new monastic schools of meager instruction." "The new ruling classes were grossly ignorant, and did not care for the old literature and science, even so far as it had survived."—West.

I could give page after page showing up the Christian rule, but I think you all understand how it was in the Christian period commonly called the "Dark Ages. After the church ruled for several centuries, it burst into fragments and freethought and science began to revive and have not been put to sleep since. The church did not completely lose its grip, but nearly all of its controlling power.

Now I shall leave it for the reader to decide whether Christianity has been for the betterment of the human race or not.

Humanitarianism

(By A. E. Wade.)

All phenomena manifest to us through our senses centers in conscious existence. The "Ego", (I), myself, is the center of the boundless Universe which is without limit or circumference. How much so ever we may speculate or theorize about the non-existence of spirit, our conscious sense of existence asserts itself, and no amount of reasoning can convince us that this body is all there is of man.

When we look abroad over the world, we behold innumerable bodies similar in all respects to this one which we inhabit, and manifesting all the doings which we are capable of and much more; and we conclude from analogy, that each one of these bodies is actuated by an Ego the same as I myself. We cannot fail to observe that we are all bound together in one great

commonwealth, and that the good of each one is more or less dependent on the welfare of all. No one can enrich himself by robbing his neighbor without sooner or later losing more than he will gain. A conviction of this fact, is the origin of all human governments, which are instituted to compel men to obey this law.

But not only does the "Law of Retribution" obtain in evil doing, but also in all the good we may do to our fellow men. The selfish man is not selfish in the proper meaning of the word, but he is a foolish man. The man who gains the confidence of his fellows and is entrusted with a large sum of money and absconds, is blind to his own interests, and will surely have to pay the penalty. If he is not caught and punished by law, his conscience (if he has any) will torment him until he makes restitution.

(A man without a conscience is little better off than a brute, insensible to all enjoyment but his brute nature.) Neither do we believe he can escape all punishment by taking his own life, as many have attempted to do. We cannot believe that this is the only life we shall live. It is against all reason and common sense.

If Matter and Force are eternal, then surely the Ego, the source of all existence, must be as endless as matter. I may pass through a season of unconsciousness at death as when sound asleep, but I shall doubtless awake again to another life of usefulness and activity.

Not only does the "fear of something after death", as Shakespeare says, "make cowards of us all," but the hope of a "Crown of Glory" (honor and praise of well doing) would be vain to the martyr who gave his life for any great and noble cause, if death ended all.

Urbana, Ill.

Takes a Fall Out of Orthodoxy

Text of an Address Recently Delivered at
a Liberal Pic-nic Given in Moffitt's
Grove at Newton, Iowa.

(By Perry Engle.)

We believe that church people are far better than their creeds.

Millions of noble men and women, prompted by their generous hearts, have labored and suffered for the salvation of others. They read from their Bibles that all unbelievers will be lost. These people believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and is infallible. Free press and Free thought call for facts.

Rev. D. Thomas said: "We have claimed too much for the Bible. It is not necessary to believe that the bears devoured the forty-two children, nor that Jonah was swallowed by the whale."

Rev. Kohler, of Chicago, said: "We are greatly indebted to Voltaire, Paine and Ingersoll, whose bold and cutting wit has brought about our glorious freedom."

Peter Cooper said: "I regard the Bible stories of the Creation, the fall of man as mere legends."

If I believed that Daniel, Isaiah and Paul were inspired, I would also include Jefferson, Lincoln and Ingersoll.

An infallible revelation was never given to fallible men.

Contrast David's cursing prayer in 109th Psalm with "Give us this day our daily bread." Light partakes of the color of the glass through which it shines; water tastes of the vessel in which it stands. The Bible was written by many men; some of whom are unknown. We believe of man, that death is a progressive step in life.

No God can be angry with the natural development that brings all things from the lower to the higher. God or good is in all and above all.

As all nature tends upward, there can be no almighty devil, or endless hell; but instead, endless progress. Man is never saved, but eternally progressed. Good food properly cooked and properly eaten is always blessed. No god would bless unhealthy and badly cooked food. There is not a life insurance company on earth that will take a greater risk against dyspepsia because the food was blessed at the table.

How about answering prayer? One man is making hay; another across the road is plowing corn. One prays for rain; the other for dry weather. Gen. Stonewall Jackson prays for the success of the rebel armies. Gen. Howard prays for the success of the Union forces. What is God to do?

When you ask God to do a thing, you ask him to do either right or wrong. Why ask a good God to do right? Nobody wants him to do wrong.

Many people believe that creeds are of God, and kill unbelievers in defense of them. Men and women have been burned at the stake for believing that there was no God. Also for believing that there was but one God. Some believe that innocent babes will be roasted in an endless hell because its parents failed to have its head wet by a priest. Men have been put to death for being a Catholic, a Protestant, a Baptist and a Quaker.

Men have been put to death for denying the divinity of a priest; for believing that Christ was not his own father; for believing that three persons correctly added together make but one.

This age of progress is not satisfied with mummified theology. Orthodoxy has been answered by Science. Geology is its enemy; Astronomy antagonizes it; Ornithology guys it to death.

The old creeds have made the world miserable. Millions have been driven insane; millions have been imprisoned and murdered for the love of God, as set forth in the old creeds. For many centuries the earth and skies were kept lurid with the flames of an endless hell.

None now but a low-foreheaded, high-paid evangelist could have the cheek to preach it. Men now enjoy the luxury of thinking. Thinking destroys superstition in the old creeds that has masqueraded as religion for ages. The world is growing better. Men are becoming more civilized, and are civilizing old creeds and old theology.

A great number of our ministers take the liberty of disagreeing in many things, with their Presbyteries and Synods. For this two hundred years ago they might have been burned for heresy. Many church members take the liberty of disagreeing with their pastor.

Most Christians are only nominally so. Very few believe their creeds.

Not any live completely in accordance with the so-called Christian doctrines. Does any one love his enemies as he does himself? When smitten on one cheek, does he turn the other? All Christians do take thought for the morrow. They do not expect their God to feed them when hungry or cure them when sick.

Christians now when dying, have more faith in paying a mortgage with a ten-thousand dollar insurance policy than by prayer.

THERE'S MILLIONS IN IT.

Rome Congratulates Itself upon the Election
of Taft, and Some Comments
Thereon.

(By The Chaplain.)

The San Francisco Examiner recently published the following—

Pope Congratulates Taft.

"Rome, November 4.—The election of Taft has produced general satisfaction here. The general opinion is that Mr. Taft's election will mean a continuance of stability and a revival of business. In view of this belief, many Italian laborers expect to emigrate to America.

"The Pope has cabled his congratulations to Mr. Taft, whose election to the Presidency is thought to guarantee the acceptance of the Pope's proposals in the matter of compensation to the religious congregations of Porto Rico."

Political superstition is the same as religious superstition, and just as hard to eradicate.

I suppose all infidel Republicans who voted for Mr. Taft, will be happy now in helping Mr. Taft into the good graces of the "Vice Regent of God"—perhaps he'll send them his blessing yet—after he gets those Porto Rico millions.

The Repubs were all daft who voted for Taft—

For the rule of the Pope in the land
That they say is all free,—between you and me,

They were a hell of an ignorant band.

I think that's all at present. I might say something that would express my feelings on the Pope's "congratulations," but your type would melt printing it. Look out for press censorship now all along the line.

SAWING WOOD.

I say, that if I were dying tonight,
And in dying had suffered no pain,
I'd hate to think I'd have to rise up
And begin it all over again.

—E. A. P.

"No Beginning"

By William H. Maple.

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GENERAL BUSINESS RULES.

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS to the Blade will be discontinued at the expiration of the term for which the subscription has been paid up in advance. The address slip on the paper will show subscribers the date of expiration of subscription. Back numbers or numbers omitted will be sent, if asked for upon renewal in case of discontinuance.

SHOULD ANY SUBSCRIBER change his or her address, advise the office, giving both old and new address, as desired.

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P. O. Box 393, Lexington, Ky.

THE TRIUMPH OF PAINE.

The glorious day of a glorious triumph for Freethought and all that it implies has dawned.

Greater and more glorious still is the vindication of Thomas Paine, the Revolutionary patriot, emanating from the discussion created by the election of William Howard Taft, in spite of clerical opposition, because of his religious convictions.

It is now candidly admitted that the labors and struggles of Thomas Paine more than a century ago, made it possible that in America, at the very inception of the twentieth century, a Unitarian, one, who by implication denies or questions the divinity of the Jesus of the gospels, can be and has been elected by popular vote to the chief magistracy of the nation.

Our readers will recall that some time ago, one J. C. Martin, of Dayton, Ohio, wrote to President Roosevelt concerning the religious opinions of Judge Taft; that Roosevelt replied with a commendable letter upon the constitutional religious liberty of the American people, but it now transpires that the author of the original letter has made an answer to Roosevelt, which occupies nearly one page of a daily newspaper, in which he assumes to take the President to task for his utterances.

Concerning his defense of matters orthodox from the alleged assaults of the President, we have little concern

here. Our principal aim is to direct attention to the vindication of Paine against the assaults of the orthodox and against the libelous charge made by Roosevelt that Paine was a "filthy little atheist."

It will also be recalled that our distinguished Freethought advocate, Franklin H. Heald, also wrote a letter to President Roosevelt, which appeared in the Blade columns, asking for a retraction of that charge he had made against Paine, but as yet we are not advised if any reply has been made thereto. In any event, Roosevelt has not by word, act or sign indicated any intention to correct his manifest error and still appears willing that his false statement should go before the world as an expression of his opinion concerning the character of him who really gave old glory to the American people as the emblem of a nation of free men.

But to the point. Mr. Martin, the President's correspondent, claims to be an ex-minister of the gospel of Jesus. Whether his "ex" is due to the fact that he has had enough of orthodox presumptions, the Blade does not know. It may be that he is still of an orthodox trend, and we judge that he is from his efforts to defend religious tenets against what President Roosevelt has said. And yet, orthodox he may, but liberal he certainly must be. From out the mass of argument injected by him into this discussion, we cull the following gem, which clearly and unmistakably clears the ground for further action by President Roosevelt, provided he has that moral courage which will enable him to admit an error, clearly shown, and is not influenced by personal pride and vanity to such an extent that he would be unwilling to give justice where justice is due. But read what Mr. Martin has to say about Paine,—

"Now, Mr. President, did not the inconsistency of your characterization a few years ago of Thomas Paine as a 'filthy little atheist,' who was then, as Mr. Taft is now, a Unitarian, have much to do with your position on this subject? Let that be as it may, there are many who believe that Thomas Paine made it possible for a Unitarian to be elected President of the United States in this year of Our Lord, 1908, and that he did more for civil and religious liberty than any man of his time. Look at the services he rendered during the Revolutionary period, at which time, as he himself expressed it, 'tried men's souls.' His 'Rights of Man' was an epoch-making production known and acknowledged by his compeers and compatriots. Now, sir, it will be claimed your defending Mr. Taft's right to hold the religious belief of Thomas Paine is worthy of the present exalted state of education and civilization.

"Now, Mr. President, before proceeding further in answer to your assertions, I desire to call your attention to a few quotations:

"I believe in one God and no more. The world is my country, and to do good is my religion. The creation we behold is the ever-existing word of God. I have always strenuously supported the right of every man to his opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who

denies to another this right makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it. The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason. I have never used any other, and I trust I never shall."

The above are the utterances of Thomas Paine, of whom in the "Life of Gouverneur Morris," written by yourself, on page 289, is the statement that Thomas Paine was a "filthy little atheist." This was written in 1896, and in the last edition of the book, printed in 1906, the charge still remains the same, which charge is untrue, as the foregoing quotations clearly prove. It proves further that his religion was the very same as that which Mr. W. H. Taft, the President-elect, now entertains, and which you are so strenuously defending. Consistency, thou art a dozen jewels—eighteen carat jewels.

Is not this enough? What Freethinker would ask for more? Let us rejoice that even in this late day the truth becomes manifest and the name of Thomas Paine is presented unsullied before the world. In a previous issue we asked what the President would do in view of the letter sent to him by Mr. Heald? We now ask what will he do in view of the continent-wide publication of Mr. Martin's response and in view of his remarks concerning the character and integrity of Paine as above quoted?

Can President Roosevelt allow such a statement to go without making a good and sufficient answer? If he does, he subjects himself to the charge of moral cowardice, of being inconsistent and an ingrate. He is now given an opportunity to put himself right in the eyes of the great liberal world of men and women, and in justice to himself he should avail himself thereof without delay.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS.

With this issue the Blade and its readers enter upon another year together.

Let us all join in the hope that this year will prove better and happier to each than the past year; that we may each know less sorrow and pain, and that every passing hour will bring a new joy, fulfill a hope and make some kind promise good.

The year just closed has been both eventful and promising. Important events in the history of Freethought in America have been chronicled. The Materialist Association has been successfully organized and placed upon an actual working basis. The Church of Humanity has been established. These organizations are national in the scope of their operations. Friendly competition between them may produce success for both. Quite a number of local Freethought societies have been organized, while in San Francisco a branch of the Materialist Association is reported in a flourishing condition. The Buckeye Secular Union has embarked upon a wider scope of organized activity, and preparations are even now being made for its next annual convention. So much for organized Freethought. Contin-

ued effort, wise counsel, fearless propaganda, and good leadership may produce even better results this year than last.

Speaking for itself, the Blade can boast of a decided improvement, for which numerous congratulations have been extended. The change in the form of publication was a decided, but costly improvement. Additional writers of merit and ability have been added to its splendid corps of contributors, furnishing its readers with matter more varied and of better quality. It has enjoyed an appreciable increase in its subscription, in spite of business depression and adversity, but this increase has been less in proportion to the increased cost of publication, thereby entailing a financial loss as previously explained. But the signs are hopeful. With a return of normal conditions in the business and industrial circles of the nation, the Blade anticipates that it will be able to show much better results, and this gives us both encouragement and hope.

Peering into the future, we may safely predict better conditions throughout the Freethought ranks in America. We have the Annual Convention of the Buckeye Secular Union, at Columbus, to look forward to, and all signs favor the prediction that it will be one of the best and largest gatherings of its kind ever held in this country under the auspices and in the name of organized Freethought.

The Materialist Association will not meet in convention this year. If the funds are forthcoming, it hopes to get out two publications for general distribution. First, will come the Wettstein pamphlet, or brochure, consisting of his Canal Dover address, and then follows the publication, in book form, of the symposium on "No Future Life." Both of these should be published this year. They will be if the members and friends of the Association will but rally to its support and furnish the necessary funds.

It is also gratifying to know that a larger number of Paine celebrations are being arranged for this year, which indicates greater activity among Freethinkers as concerns the public portion of their work. This is an excellent sign of a re-awakening of the Freethought hosts. As the number of Paine celebrations increase, our propaganda assumes a more active phase and others derive encouragement therefrom. Like begets like; courage begets courage, and friendliness brings friendship.

The Blade would like to see a revival, if we may call it such, in the lecture work. Not so many years ago the cause could boast from eight to twelve lecturers in the field, men and women, each and all laboring for mental emancipation. Today these are absent. None have taken their places. We need competent and capable men and women who are willing to engage themselves in this work. They should represent the cause in its entirety. Although it has been twelve years since the Blade's editor retired from the Freethought platform, up to the time of the Canal Dover convention, yet he would resume this work to a limited extent, as far as his editorial duties would permit, if additional help could be assured in the Blade office. This would be a start and pave the way for others to follow.

All this, however, is speculative. More active workers in prospective battle-fields are a condition precedent, and when these can be assured through the medium of local clubs, or societies, the lecturers will be forthcoming. In any event, this important branch of our common work should not be overlooked, and the coming year ought to witness a general movement in this direction.

We must not fail to mention the Correspondence School. While the number of students enrolled did not come up to expectations, we have twenty-two pupils taking the lessons, but only a part of these submit the necessary examinations. Those failing are not deriving all the benefits the school has to offer. In spite of repeated admonitions no examinations are coming from them. The few who do submit their pages for grading have made a truly remarkable progress, and their minds will be attuned to the advanced stages of the second year's course. Under these conditions, the tuition fees paid in will hardly cover the expense incurred in printing and postage, while the labor expended in the preparation of the questions propounded each month, the passing upon the examinations sent in, is, in all respects, a labor of love alone, but we do not regret this if only the desired results can be obtained. In our next succeeding issue we shall discuss the Correspondence School with a view of making the tuition free and general to all Blade readers.

To our subscribers, our readers and friends, to our amiable contemporaries in America and elsewhere, we extend fraternal greetings, and indulge the fond hope that the new year may bring better health and greater strength in the prosecution of life's duties. May an abundant prosperity come to all who love mankind and are defenders of truth. May each tick of the clock cause you a new joy and every day dawn brighter and happier than yesterday.

IGNORANCE OF BIBLE WRITERS.

Some months ago, while discussing religious subjects with an intellectual friend, we were asked—

"Do you not really think that the Bible literature was written and compiled by a lot of ignorant men?"

This is admittedly the ground taken, or the position assumed by many Freethinkers. In a comparative sense, the question can be truthfully answered in the affirmative, but generally speaking, it would not be. Compared with the extent of human knowledge today, backed by centuries of experience, each succeeding generation drawing to itself all the knowledge of its predecessors, and adding thereto another and enlarged knowledge all its own, those who wrote and compiled the Bible literature may be considered as ignorant persons, but we must give them all due credit for having done the best they could under the circumstances and in the light afforded them. But if we compare them with the people of their own day and age, we must admit that they were far above the average in intelligence. The

answer made at the time the question was put, was in accord

There is no record of any Bible manuscript prior to with the statements here made.

about 700 years B. C. It must be admitted that at such a remote period civilization, at least among the Jews, was in its early infancy. Vastly inferior in intellect to the surrounding cults, the early Jewish writers saw, but they could not understand. Designing and unscrupulous vanity invented an explanation for natural phenomena. This explanation satisfied for a time, but as the individual thought became impressed with surrounding natural objects, it was found that the explanations offered did not explain. The mystery deepened and doubts were made known.

During the infancy of the race, men adopted the best and easiest means known to them to express their ideas, which was by the use of symbols. Bible compilers and writers fell into the same habit, so that we may rightly consider the Bible as a collection of symbols and allegory, used in an effort to explain natural phenomena as they understood it. Thus, when the Christian lavishes his worshipful adoration upon the Bible, they are merely worshipping the symbols of knowledge and not knowledge itself. To know, is personal; to believe, is to be satisfied with information derived from others.

In his essay on "Education," Herbert Spencer remarks that in the earlier stages of the world's history men resorted to ornamentation before utility; and that even to-day men "dress their children's minds as they do their bodies, in the prevailing fashions." If then, fashion determines so much in this day of progress and development, how much greater would be the influence exercised upon the mind more than two thousand years ago, among a practically isolated people, barbaric in impulse, lacking even a sense of culture and refinement?

Reference is made, however, to the proverbs, in the construction of which considerable knowledge, and even wisdom, were essential and requisite, and assuming that Solomon was the author, he must have possessed these qualifications. The premises may be accepted as true, but the conclusion is erroneous. As a matter of fact, Solomon was the compiler, and not the author, of the proverbs. This leads to the inference that some one else wrote them. The further inference is that Solomon acquired possession through his office as king, of some outside literature, among them the proverbs, and that he re-wrote, changed, modified and amended them to make them applicable to the Jews and Jehovah.

Before proceeding to consider questions involving physical principles, with which Bible literature assumes to deal, it is necessary that we do so with clear ideas of what is naturally possible and what is naturally impossible. This Bible writers have wholly failed to do. They have assumed to chronicle events now known to be physically impossible, and have ignored the possible. As mankind is never freely willing to admit a truth that is of unpleasant character, so the Bible worshippers, unwilling to admit its known

errors, succeed in deceiving themselves and vainly imagine that they have also succeeded in deceiving others. Not infrequently do we receive information from unpleasant sources, and whether they like it or not, the Bible believers are bound to admit the truth of the Freethought position, however much they may decline to make such an admission known.

"Nine hundred and twenty-five American trusts, with a capital of over \$6,000,000,000," says the London Clarion, "absorb all the wealth created by 3,500,000 men. These millions of men are performing no other functions in the world than sustaining the gigantic corporations, and the only use made of the capital thus created is to enrich and gratify a few thousand millionaires."

CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCE.

During the past two weeks, or more, the Blade has received a number of communications from its readers and friends relative to the observance of Christmas by Freethinkers, and these have raised an exceedingly interesting discussion of the subject. In this, as in many other questions, even Freethinkers are somewhat divided, but all agree that the air of sanctified holiness with which the orthodox have surrounded the day, and the religious import given to it, should be disregarded, while retaining, in many respects, the custom and practices the season has developed.

Some of our correspondents exhibit a tendency towards extremes and as a result, we find them expressing opposite views. One writes that for years he has abstained from giving or receiving presents on that day for the only reason that the Christmas world has surrounded the custom with the mythical Santa Claus, a genuine lie, while another writes, a mother of children, that she really enjoys the Christmas tree and the air of mystery enshrouding it, in the minds of her children. For the most part the others express an indifference upon the subject.

Custom and habit, partially inherited and partially acquired by reason of association, will, as a general rule, exercise somewhat of an influence upon the life of the matured individual. Folklore has played a prominent part in the history of all nations. Irrespective of the fact that a grown person has discarded from his or her mind, many of the vulgarisms and popular constructions placed upon such subjects, there is a marked tendency, among many people to observe them more by sanction than desire and to keep in the prevailing fashions of the day and age. Women allow their hair to grow long and men have their hair closely trimmed, because of fashion and custom. The same may be said of the manner and difference of dress. Freethinkers may observe Sunday as a day of rest although disregarding the religious elements contained in official sanction thereto, and numerous other incidents connected with our daily habits could be thus classified. Secular considerations alone may frequently justify some of our

acts without the slightest regard to theological conceptions. The same argument can be advantageously used in regard to observing Christmas.

Parents, who in their own childhood days, were fooled into a belief in the existence of the mythical Santa Claus, who made only annual visits on a certain day and in some mysterious way kept hid from human eyes, still practice the same deceits upon their children well knowing that they are teaching and promulgating an untruth by so doing. All men and women love to see innocent childhood indulge in and partake of innocent enjoyments. They love to see children happy. But it is unnecessary to force upon them, during the period of helplessness, a delusion that must be dispelled in a few years at least. The pleasures derived from such a practice, if they may be called such, are too fleeting and vague to justify and compensate for the anguish that must be experienced when the fraud is discovered. The Blade believes it would be far better to tell the little ones the truth, for no moral virtue can possibly lie in deceitful practices.

The student of science and history knows that the Christmas festival of the Christian world, professing in celebration of the birth of a mythical man-god, is in reality a borrowed institution having its origin in a solar event and based upon the fact that on the 25th day of December of each year, the sun has started its upward journey from the winter solstice to the summer solstice, and, as thousands insist, should be made the first day of the new year, the calendar being changed in accordance therewith. But few professing Christians really know why they celebrate the day. Freethinkers will give tacit observance thereto, not as a "holy-day" but as a "holiday" at a propitious season of the year. Whatever conduces to human happiness without any attendant or resultant evils, may be properly encouraged, but if happiness can only be secured to suffer pain and anguish, its value is exceedingly doubtful.

The necessary copies of each issue of the Blade from January 19 to December 27, 1908, comprising the issues that are to be included in the bound volume, are now in our binding department and we expect that within the next few days we will be able to ship them to those friends who have subscribed for it. Some of our friends have not yet paid the amount of the subscription and these are now gently reminded that they are due.

Arrangements are being made for a number of articles from the pens of a dozen or more of the most prominent Freethought writers in America, to be published in the Blade during 1909. Get your friends to subscribe now before it is too late to get the benefits here offered.

We can easily fill about twelve more orders for the bound volume of 1908, provided, they reach us in time. Who wants them?

Vigilance is Yet the Price of Liberty

Catholic Influence upon the Election of
Rail and a few reasons for
our being cautious.

(By Wm. H. Cox.)

THE ELECTION of William H. Taft to the Presidency of the United States is now an historical fact.

But has not Mr. Roosevelt's recent letter to J. C. Mahan, of Dayton, O., in regard to the religious question, put all Protestant denominations of this country to serious thinking?

From the protests that have gone up on this question, it looks as though Protestant America was not yet ready to be handed over to the Pope of Rome. The recent protest of the patriotic Lutherans of New York City was timely and to the point. They have voiced all other Protestant denominations of this country. They know the Church of Rome is as much a political organization as a religious one, and therefore cannot be trusted with the reins of this free government. They further know that it would be as dangerous to elect a Catholic priest, Bishop or Cardinal to the Presidency as it would be to put a crazy man in a powder house with a lighted torch. Should it ever come to this, then free speech, free press and sweet liberty would be things only to be dreamed of.

We know the Catholic Church from her history. We know the hierarchy is strictly against the Constitution of the United States and the home of the free. There is no other church in this country that takes part in political affairs. There is no other church in this country that sends and receives ambassadors. There is no other church that holds court at which royal ceremonial is observed, embassies from foreign governments received, and far-reaching questions of international importance debated and settled. The Roman Catholic Church never enters into a political contest without first looking to the advantage she is to derive. She looks at every question from this point of view. Every prelate and every priest is taught and sworn to hold the church above every other institution in the world. Read Pope Boniface VIII, in his Bull Unam Sanctum; Pius IX in his Syllabus of 1864; Leo XIII, in his Encyclicals of 1885; read Cardinal Gibbons in his "Fifth of Our Fathers." Read these references closely. See what those Popes have said in regard to church and state.

Every loyal American citizen should be posted on these questions. At what period of time has the Roman Catholic Church

done anything for the cause of freedom, —freedom of speech, freedom of labor or of thought. Which has she failed to side with tyranny as against reform? She has always been the arch-enemy of the people—from the days of Philip II,—when she outfired the hundred thousand men who dared to think and reason for themselves; and to the very last the Catholic Church stood by slavery. She was the last to give up her slaves. The Catholic Church has opposed the separation of church and state; she has opposed the general education of the people, and is today the mortal enemy of our public schools.

To the very last she opposed self-government by the people. She is today the staunch defender of the divine rights of kings. All good Catholics claim that the Pope is infallible, and that all Popes have been true and worthy vice-regents of Jesus Christ. He believes his priest has the power to forgive sin, and by prayer can lift a soul from hell to heaven.

With the Catholic Church in full control of this country, what could the Freethinkers and scientific men expect? Nothing short of a repetition of past history, which means death. There is no other church or political party in this country whose priests and Bishops, Arch-bishops, Cardinals and Ambassadors are under oath to an Italian "God Almighty."

Pope Leo's letter to priest Quigley, at Buffalo, N. Y., when he was to be consecrated Bishop of Western New York, in February, 1897, stated that he must first take the oath, and make the profession of faith,—"articles professed by this Apostolic See, in our name and that of the Roman Church." The Buffalo Times, Feb. 24th, 1897, published the solemn consecrating ceremony of priest Quigley. It stated that the priest-bishop-elect knelt at the feet of Archbishop Corrigan and took the prescribed oath. This profession of faith and oath, taken by all the obedient servants of an old monk-Pope, should be read by all the loyal citizens of the country; and then they may think that opposition to such men in public office in this land of the free in mind and body, is not the opposition of bigotry or ignorance, for Popery is absolute slavery. It has always, always been thus, and will always remain so as long as it has any political or temporal power.

The last Convention of the Federation of Catholic Clubs at Boston, on August 10th last, has suggested some queer things to the writer of this article. First, a cablegram of congratulations, in which the Papal

blessing was asked, was sent to Cardinal Merry del Val at the Vatican. Of course, the Vatican would have to be notified of such a gathering, it not, then their work would be null and void. But on receipt of the Papal blessing, they can then proceed to do business as a holy order, and as such they proceeded to do up the work before the convention. Some of the most important things reported from this body was the pressure they brought to bear in getting Congress to pass a bill for compensation for damages sustained in the Philippines, and in pushing charges against Judge Wilney, of the United States Court in China, on complaint of Roman Catholics in Shanghai; and in doubling the strength of the Federation in the past year; also devising a scheme to have division of public school funds. Last, but not least, was the condemnation of Socialists and Freethinkers by Archbishop Wm. H. O'Connor, of Boston, and Bishop Francis Regis Canevin, of Pittsburg, Pa. Both urged the delegates to resist the attacks of the enemies of the church, such as Socialists and Freethinkers. Just imagine the result. The priesthood, for ages, have been utterly incapable of battling this class of scientific men and women, now clapping their hands and "sicking" on the dogs of war at doing something in which they themselves have made a dismal failure.

There is but one way in which this ignorant horde could battle against the pen of reason, and that is with an ax. It surely could not do so from reason, for this is an article they do not possess. The priests of superstition may as well ask the glow-worms and fire-flies to battle the darkness of night as for the Roman Catholic hierarchy to fight science.

If the Catholic hierarchy had its way, education would be under the control of the religious orders, and the youth of our country would be taught the doctrines of absolutism in church and state. It was so in France. Clericalism was a constant menace to the Republic, until, at last, the religious orders were banished; education was taken under the control of the government, and the decree was passed for the complete separation of church and state.

The American people cannot be too often reminded that "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

Does Excellent Work.

OHIO.—Gentlemen, publishers of the best Freethought periodical published in the South, to my knowledge, I have by handing out my Blade to friends, had the good fortune to secure for this day another subscriber. He handed me the price of his subscription which I now send to you, and you will please send the Blade to the name given. I hope he will do as I have done.—S. C. FOGLESONG.

The Blade's Correspondence

Wants a Bound Volume.

TEXAS.—Being a subscriber to your valuable publication now for many years, and at present a recent delinquent, nevertheless I desire to place an order for one bound volume of the Blade—from January 19th to December 27th, 1908—with my name printed on same, provided you will hold the volume until such time as I can remit, which I hope will be in the near future, or as soon as I can make a "land-turn." With best wishes for the future of the Blade, I am,—A. H. MEELY.

Is Ready To Help.

CALIFORNIA.—I approve of the plan of incorporation, and will do what I can to get new subscribers, and will certainly buy stock to the extent of \$10.00, if the incorporation plan is approved by the present contributors of the Blue Grass Blade.—J. H. COLLINS.

Poems Promised.

CALIFORNIA.—I have written two poems, one entitled "Life," and the other a sequel to Life, entitled "Death." If you would care to examine these poems with a view to publishing them, I shall be glad to send them to you. The poems are of somewhat unusual length, "Life" containing 21 verses, and "Death" 50 verses. I ask nothing for these poems, except that they be returned if not published.—LAWRENCE BROADWELL.

Will Have Paine Dinner.

OHIO.—We will have our Tom Paine Dinner on January 31 (Sunday.) When can you come here to give us a lecture in Uhrichsville? Could you make it on Saturday evening, January 30? The Opera House is vacant for that evening, and I am holding it for one week to see if you can so arrange. Let me know if the date suits you. If not, advise me when you can come. I have been so busy, and have been away, etc., that I am behind the times. Ohio is mud on temperance, or what is known as Local Option, as 'per those laws, which is County. We will soon have to go to Kentucky for our inspiration. I guess Hardesty has the Opera House O. K. for the Debates. I hope we shall have good crowds and success generally.—GEORGE O. ROBERTS.

Blade Must Not Wane.

OHIO.—The article published in the Blade of Dec. 6th on page 9, is appalling in the extreme. It brings to my mind a Kentucky woman who claimed to be a sanctified Methodist, and went to a far-off land to make in the coin; and then desired to return to her native land, and gives God the glory by saying He will save her alone; and prays daily. I think when you know what sin is, you should not worship at a holy shrine, for fear you'd grieve its Holy Presence, to sin in such a manner with impunity. Such creatures should be cut off like the barren fig tree spoken of in Holy Writ.

Put me down for one dollar to the Emergen-

cy Fund. No, no, never let the good B. G. B. wane. I have read the Blade for 20 years.—A FRIEND.

Anxious for the Debate.

OHIO.—I see by the Blade that you are going to have a Debate at Canal Dover. The mail agent who comes from there tells me the people of that locality are looking forward to the time with great expectations. I would love to be there, and if I can arrange my work so I can, I am going to hear you give the sky-pilot his bumps. Charlesworth, there is nothing doing here to speak of that will interest you; but while the religionists are hot after one another, I have written an article against our worst enemy, and while this subject is on the tongues of all I believe it is worth publishing in the Blade. So if in your opinion, it is the right stuff at the right time, crowd it in now while the iron is hot. Charlesworth, it has distressed me very much to read the financial condition of the Blade. After the 1st of next July I hope to be able to assist you in this matter; and if I live I will do so. Our Club here is not growing as rapidly as it should, and we are now waiting until the Local Option election is over, which is to be held on the 19th. After that we are going to get down to business. I hope in my next letter to report the birth of a good Club.—WM. H. COX.

Just a Few Pointers.

OHIO.—I made no reply to your request for an opinion on the Blade Stock Company, for the simple reason that I wanted to study the pulse of our people. Their replies indicate that they realize your predicament only to an extent, leaving you to sustain the entire cause by your own efforts with a mere hand-to-mouth method if necessary. This is an imposition of the grossest kind. (Kindly consider this letter personal.) Well do they show their patriotism when you are doomed to extinction, as in the Postoffice scare. But now realizing no immediate danger, they remain dormant. I would kindly insist on coming at them with the following: How much can I depend on from each and every individual Freethinker, as subscriber to the Blade, payable yearly in advance? \$1.50, \$2.00, \$3.00, and as high as can be reached. Put up or leave me to shut up. Subscribers to answer per mail by check, or stating the time payment can be expected. I have found this the only business method in the practice of medicine, which I have followed for 20 years. Don't come often, but come hard when you do. So far as I am concerned, I will pay \$3 per year from this on as long as I like the Blade, providing the rest of the subscribers will obligate themselves, specifying the various amounts to be paid. Resp'y.—A FRIEND.

A Very Pointed Question.

MAINE.—Will you, or some of your intelligent contributors explain why Freethinkers and the Liberal press, almost without exception, fall right in with Christians in celebrating the mass for Christ?

I have wondered if they repeat the Lord's prayer in unison as they gather at the morning meal? I respect the celebration of the Lord's supper and the 39 Articles of the Christian faith just as much as I do these other church feasts. I was in the church many years and hence had some bad habits. For several decades I could hardly keep tobacco out of my mouth long enough to get a chew of the body of g-sus or a lap at his blood; but when I stuffed off that old moss-backed superstition known as Christianity, I began to clean house. With my graduation from the old into the new, I did my best to get rid of every expression that could ever become a reminder of the fake I had so long fostered. I never use the word Christmas in my conversation, and for more than 35 years have not accepted nor made a present at that time, and I have children ranging all along from 3½ years to 35. We cannot afford to lie to the children and teach them to become criminals. Have you ever observed the vast number of thefts at this season of the year? Do you not see how inconsistent it is for us to lend a hand in aid of perpetuating this criminal force, in celebrating the birthday of a mythical g-sus? Let us be consistent at any rate. It galls me awfully to write "1908," and I hope we may soon be able to abolish that.—JOHN P. THORNDYKE.

Wants the Wettstein Pamphlet.

OHIO.—I want one dozen well bound copies of that splendid address of Mr. Wettstein's, "The Ax at the Root." I do not promise, though, to be satisfied with one dozen only. I have a book here, "The Desert of Waiting." It is 6¼x3½, 32 pages, 80 words on a page. According to my estimate, Mr. Wettstein's address put up in the same way, would make 82 pages. It is well written and should be well bound.—H. M. LUCAS.

The True Christian Way.

CONN.—Some weeks ago I sent you a clipping from the religious column of the Saturday Globe, of Utica, N. Y. Said clipping stated that the days of infidelity had passed; that there were no infidels in the country.

I immediately sent The Globe a copy of The Blade, containing a program of the convention we were about to hold at Canal Dover, O., and I wrote them referring to this convention of Freethinkers and reminded them that the Blade and numerous other papers and magazines were supported entirely by infidel readers; and that I trusted their desire to keep their readers well informed and their love of truth and fair dealing would prompt them in rectifying the statement made in a previous issue of their paper.

But they have entirely ignored the subject. Mr. Editor, is that the right way to do business, or is that the Christian way?—THOMAS TRUHART.

Takes a Bound Volume.

IOWA.—Put me down for a bound volume of the Blade. I am trying to get our Public (Carriage) Library Board to say that they would accept a copy as a present, but I fear that I am going to fail in that, because the Board is composed of two ladies, one a Presbyterian, one a Methodist, and one gentleman, who is also a Methodist, but is inclined to be fair and liberal. I believe that if I can persuade them to admit it, the Liberal people will chip in and pay for it. I would do so alone if I could afford to. Hoping that the Blade will prosper, I remain.—C. B. LEBARTON.

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Josephine K. Henry, Versailles, Ky.

Dr. J. B. Wilson, 206 East Fourth Street, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Parker H. Sercombe, Editor Tomorrow, 139 East 56th Street, Chicago, Illinois.

John R. Charlesworth, Lexington, Ky.

Marion W. Marley, Bucklin, Kansas.

A. J. Clausen, St. Ansgar, Iowa.

J. C. Hannon, 3575 Wallace St.,

Philadelphia, Pa.

Stanberry Alderman, McConnellsville, O.

H. H. Lane, 292 N. Front St., New Haven, Conn.

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